

Please renumber Claim 23 to 35 as set forth below.

Claims 11-16 (Previously cancelled)

17. (previously added) A method for extracting a tissue sample from a desired site, the method comprising the steps of:

piercing tissue with an instrument, the instrument comprising an outer hollow cannula and an inner member having a distal end portion, the inner member at least partially disposed within the hollow cannula;

positioning the hollow cannula within the tissue at a desired tissue site;

D1  
actuating a first mechanism associated with the instrument to move the distal end portion of the inner member distally, relative to the outer hollow cannula, so that the distal end portion expands radially and engages a tissue sample to be extracted;

actuating a second mechanism associated with the instrument to move the outer hollow cannula distally, relative to the distal end portion, to radially retract the distal end portion; and

withdrawing the instrument, with the tissue sample, from the tissue.

18. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein the step of piercing tissue comprises piercing tissue with an end portion of the outer hollow cannula.

19. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 comprising grasping a tissue sample with a pair of jaws associated with the distal portion of the inner member.

20. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 comprising grasping a tissue sample with a plurality of hooked extractors associated with the distal end of the inner member.

21. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein the step of actuating the first mechanism comprises releasing energy stored in a spring element.

22. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein the step of actuating the second mechanism comprises releasing energy stored in a spring element.

35 23 (renumbered from 23 to 35) A method for extracting a tissue sample from a desired site, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an instrument comprising an outer hollow cannula, an inner member having a distal end portion capable of radial expansion, and at least one mechanism for moving the outer hollow cannula relative to the inner member;

piercing tissue with a distal end of the outer hollow cannula;

moving the distal end portion of the inner member from a point inside the outer hollow cannula with the at least one mechanism to a position distal of the distal end of the outer hollow cannula to expand the distal end portion of the inner member;

engaging tissue with the distal end portion of the inner member; and

moving the outer hollow cannula relative to the inner member to capture tissue within the distal end portion of the inner member.